

to the homeland security frontline individuals. We need to be able to have a system where we can all communicate together. Just imagine in the course of our work of securing the home front that we have difficulties because we have systems that are different. Work needs to be done in this area, and we cannot do it with a budget that clearly does not give credence to the two important responsibilities we have now: the home front juxtaposed or right next door to the raging winds of war, and then the domestic agenda of people who are now suffering with, I understand, some 200,000 service jobs being cut, unemployment still at a peak, and people in need.

This is an important discussion. I am hoping that this budget process that shows such enormous cuts, and allow me to say two others, the veterans benefits, billions have been cut from pensions and safety net programs, such as SSI, where \$62 billion over 10 years has been cut from the Earned Income Tax Credit, which is one that we have been very supportive of. Then the environment has been cut, and health care.

So I would simply say, Mr. Speaker, that our voices need to be heard, because we need to get to work and uphold the constitutional duty of this Congress to have oversight over war spending and the constitutional duty as well to be engaged in the budgeting process as we lift up monies for armies; but we need to deal with this budget to help the people we represent all over America.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman. I just wanted to say this to the gentlewoman: I just wanted to say, Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Black Caucus stands behind our troops, but we also stand for a very strong America. We stand for our Constitution, and we want it to be well. We also stand for that flag that is up there behind you. We stand for the little children that tomorrow morning will put their little hands up to their little hearts and say, "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God."

That is why we have come here today, to just remind America, and beg America, to pray for our troops, to lift their families up in their prayers, but also to be vigilant, to be vigilant for the rights and the privileges that we have as Americans.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, just to close, I would simply say we were praying in our churches this past week. I was at the Greater St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church with Pastor Willie Davis; and we prayed, and we prayed across Houston and the Nation. I believe we have the freedom to pray. No one is forced to pray. We wanted to pray, our different faiths. And I agree with the gentleman, we pledge ourselves to a united Nation, and we pledge our resolve for our troops to come home. But we also pledge, as the youngsters at Forest

Brook High School said, will there be an opportunity for me to be educated? That is why we are here on the floor today, to insist that we stand united for the troops, but also united for the people of America, for the opportunities for them in the future.

I thank the gentleman for allowing me to be here this evening.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in strong support of our troops.

Today, American men and women are putting their lives on the line in the service of their country. I deeply mourn the deaths of our troops and hope and pray for the safe return of all of their comrades in arms. I mourn as well the deaths of innocent civilians, especially children, who have been or may be caught in the crossfire of this conflict.

Some Americans are now held as prisoners of war and they hold a special place in our thoughts and prayers.

As the daughter of a career army officer, my heart goes out especially to the families of our service men and women as they anxiously await word from their loved ones. That waiting is its own kind of torment.

Thousands of National Guards and Reserves are serving in the Middle East today, honoring their commitment and abandoning their civilian lives to answer this call.

We honor their service and sacrifice as well as that of all the personnel in our armed forces.

It is my deepest hope that our troops will soon be home with their friends and families. I wish them Godspeed and hope that peace is both rapid and lasting.

In closing, let me once again reiterate my support and admiration for our troops who are in harm's way.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today after 1:00 p.m. and the balance of the week on account of official business in the district.

Mr. PUTNAM (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today until 4:00 p.m. on account of accompanying the President of the United States to visit the troops at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida.

Mr. BILIRAKIS (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today until 4:30 p.m. on account of accompanying President Bush on a visit with U.S. troops at MacDill Air Force Base.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. ISRAEL) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. ISRAEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCGOVERN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BLUMENAUER, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. CARSON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. PEARCE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. MCCOTTER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HEFLEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CRANE, for 5 minutes, March 27.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PEARCE, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, March 27, 2003, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1433. A letter from the Acting Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Folpet; Pesticide Tolerance [OPP-2003-0075; FRL-7296-2] received February 27, 2003, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1434. A letter from the Acting Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Hexythiazox; Pesticide Tolerance [OPP-2003-0036; FRL-7292-8] received February 27, 2003, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1435. A letter from the Deputy Secretary, Division of Market Regulation, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule—Customer Protection—Reserves and Custody of Securities Delegation of Authority to the Director of the Division of Market Regulations [Release No. 34-47480; File No. S7-20-02] (RIN: 3235-AI51) received March 12, 2003, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

1436. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule—Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance (RIN: 1601-AA04) received February 28, 2003, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

1437. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule—Enforcement of Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Department of Homeland Security Programs or Activities (RIN: 1601-AA05) received February 28, 2003, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

1438. A letter from the Acting Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule—Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans and Operating